

CONGRESSMAN BOUCHER ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$800,000 FOR MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

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□ Federal Economic Recovery Act Funding Will Establish Program to Train Workers for Jobs in Energy Efficient Construction and Renewable Power Industries

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□□□□□□□□□□(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Rick Boucher announced today that, at his urging, the U.S. Department of Labor, through its Pathways out of Poverty program, is providing a federal grant to establish a program to train workers in for jobs in the energy efficient construction and renewable power industries. Mountain Empire Community College will receive \$842,715 as part of a larger federal grant awarded to four community colleges nationwide.

“With the federal funding I am announcing today, a training program will be established to prepare workers for jobs in the energy efficient building and renewable power industries. The new program will offer individuals in our region without a high school degree a chance to obtain a GED, a Career Readiness Certificate and 24 college credits. In addition, participants in the program will receive on-the-job training as weatherization technicians and enroll in an Alternative Energy Certificate program. The skills students gain through the program will prepare them for full time employment in our region’s expanding energy industry ,” Boucher said.

With the benefit of the federal funds, Mountain Empire Community College will offer the PlugGED In program, a GED program piloted in Virginia Community Colleges, to help up to sixty students obtain a GED and job training through an intensive six-month program. As part of the program, Appalachian Community Action and Development Agency will provide on-the-job training in weatherization skills leading to permanent employment for up to 30 students. Additionally, the Wise Workforce Center will provide transitional on-the-job training employment for up to 30 participants. The program will also prepare students with the needed certifications to gain employment at Dominion Resource's new Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center or at Dominion's proposed wind energy facility in cooperation with BP Energy in Wise County.

"A need exists in our region for workers trained in the energy efficiency and renewable energy fields, and the new program at Mountain Empire Community College will help meet this need while assisting students obtain a GED and preparing them for employment. I am pleased that the Department of Labor has provided federal funding to help establish this worthwhile program," Boucher said.

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